

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Saturday, October 3, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "NEWS NOTES FROM WASHINGTON." Information from the Office of Information, United States Department of Agriculture.

---oooOooo---

Our Washington reporter mentions mice and moths, farmers' bulletins and autumn leaves, in her news letter today.

She says: "Old-fashioned moth balls -- or, better, moth flakes of naphthalene are good protection against both mice and moths -- but for different reasons. The mice don't like the smell of naphthalene; the clothes moths suffocate from its fumes.

"About this time of year, mice are looking for a soft safe place to make their winter nest. But they won't choose pillows, blankets, mattresses or upholstered furniture ^{if} covered by naphthalene flakes because mice dislike the naphthalene odor. (For that matter, they also avoid anything that smells of kerosene or creosote. And they don't find wintergreen or peppermint oil appetizing either.) Even very hungry mice won't feast on bags of seed in the attic or nibble book bindings if you use naphthalene as a protection.

"Clothes moths, on the other hand, aren't fussy about smells. But they can't survive in an atmosphere of naphthalene vapor. And naphthalene gives off a vapor as it evaporates. Of course, the fumes must be concentrated enough to kill moths. That's why the entomologists always advise using flakes or moth balls in a tightly sealed closet or chest and using them generously.

"By the way, naphthalene fumes kill other insects than moths. Wise flower gardeners know that the way to save gladiolus from destructive little thrips is to store the gladiolus roots or corms in a tight container with naphthalene flakes scattered over them.

"Before I forget, here are a few more notes about mice protection. Naphthalene flakes won't do for protecting food against mice because they give food a naphthalene taste. Better keep food in a tight metal container or some other place that mice just can't get into. The Survey men say also that powdered sulphur and lime are good repellants to keep stores of grain safe from mice on the farm. By the way, did you know that mice won't make their way through cracks or crevices tightly plugged with steel wool? And did you know that boxes or trunks with copper screening tacked over the outside are also proof against mice? A good many people protect blankets or bedding at summer cottages that way.

"Which reminds me of 3 bulletins that most housewives should find useful at one time or another. One is a blanket bulletin. At this time of year when you may be stocking up on blankets for the cold weather, Farmers' Bulletin No. 1765, should be a help to you. It tells you how to get your money's worth when you go to buy blankets. It is called Guides for Buying Sheets, Blankets and Bath Towels. As long as the Department's supply lasts, a copy is free--yours for the asking. Before you invest in new bedding this fall, drop a card to the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and ask for Farmers' Bulletin No. 1765, Guides for Buying Sheets, Blankets and Bath Towels.

"The Department has no bulletin on mice but much of its advice on rats holds good with mice, too. What's more, fall is the time of year when rats move in from the fields and ditches to the house and barnyard for the winter. So now is a good time to send for Farmers' Bulletin No. 1533 called Rat Control. Like the blanket bulletin, it is free as long as the supply holds out. And you order your copy from the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

"Finally there's that reliable little leaflet on clothes moths. That's another that deserves a place on every housewife's bookshelf. And now is a very good time to send for your copy. Time was when I shouldn't have mentioned moths in the fall. But that time has gone. Thanks to our evenly heated houses moths keep warm, comfortable, active and hungry the year around. You have to fight them in the fall and winter as well as in the spring and summer. So remember Leaflet No. 145 called Clothes Moths. Write to the Department of Agriculture, in Washington, D.C. for it.

"Jack Frost gets a lot of credit he doesn't deserve. For example, many people believe he is responsible for the beautiful autumn coloring of our leaves. That's a fallacy, says the Forest Service. The change of coloring in the leaves of our hardwood trees is simply their natural preparation for winter -- a general slowing of vital processes. The green color which has to do with feeding the tree fades out leaving the yellows and reds. Many trees have already turned in color before the first frost.

"The brightest colors come after a season of moderate rainfall. Too damp or too dry a season both cut down fall coloring. If the atmosphere is very moist, as in England, the colors are not vivid. If the season is dry, the leaves dry up and turn brown rapidly.

"Did you ever wonder which tree in the U. S. has the most fall color? The Forest Service gives the honors to the sumach which is found in one form or another in most of the country. Maples come next in brilliant coloring. They are very conspicuous but their color is not evenly bright. Third place goes to the dogwood tree. Other bright trees east of the Rockies are the oaks, the sassafras, tupelo or sour gum.

"In the Rockies and Pacific Coast States the aspen and vine maple are the bright trees. The aspen turns a golden yellow which contrasts handsomely with the dark green of the evergreens."

